



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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March 28, 2003

TO: Karen W. Morse, President
FROM: Marty Brown, Director
SUBJECT: Western Washington University Incident Report #03-28 Does Not Merit Review

Pursuant to RCW 43.41.370 and the Guidelines For Reporting Incidents to the Office of Financial Management (OFM), Western Washington University (WWU) submitted an Incident Report to OFM. The Report notifies OFM that on July 3, 2002, there was a fire that began on the 3rd floor of Parks Hall at College of Business and Economics resulting in property damage. The Bellingham Fire Department and state property insurer investigated the incident.

The investigations concluded that the fire began in the computer server room. This accidental fire was mostly likely caused from an electrical/mechanical malfunction of a computer unit. It is also believed that the damage was more extensive due to the lack of smoke and heat detection devices and water based suppression system in the area where the fire began. Since the fire, the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs has created a Risk Assessment Team (Team) with the University Risk Manager as the chair. The Team's goals include an educational program as well as a campus-wide survey and safety assessment, with findings and recommendations and follow up inspections to increase safety from systems and equipment. In addition, it was determined that the detection system is installed to code and approved by the Bellingham Fire Department.

RCW 43.41.370(1) requires the Director of OFM to appoint a loss prevention review team when the death of a person, serious injury to a person, or other substantial loss is alleged or suspected to be caused at least in part by the actions of a state agency unless the Director, in his or her discretion, determines that the incident "does not merit review". Applying the criteria for loss prevention reviews, issued November 18, 2002, I have determined this reported incident does not merit review. This incident resulted in property damage only. This is the first of two incidents within a short period where there was a fire due to mechanical failure. There was an extensive external review and the University has taken steps through the Team to reduce the risk of future incidents. Therefore, no further review is warranted.

This decision will be posted on the OFM website. If you have any questions about the criteria or its application to this incident, please contact either Roselyn Marcus at (360) 902-7396 or Gary Robinson at (360) 902-0528.

cc: Paul R. Mueller III, Risk Manager
Roselyn Marcus, Loss Prevention Review Team Manager